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Office of the Controller – City Services Auditor

BETTER STREETS PLAN:

**Recommendations for Improved
Streetscape Project Planning,
Design, Review and Approval**

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**CONTROLLER'S OFFICE
CITY SERVICES AUDITOR**

The City Services Auditor was created within the Controller's Office through an amendment to the City Charter that was approved by voters in November 2003. Under Appendix F to the City Charter, the City Services Auditor has broad authority for:

- Reporting on the level and effectiveness of San Francisco's public services and benchmarking the city to other public agencies and jurisdictions.
- Conducting financial and performance audits of city departments, contractors, and functions to assess efficiency and effectiveness of processes and services.
- Operating a whistleblower hotline and website and investigating reports of waste, fraud, and abuse of city resources.
- Ensuring the financial integrity and improving the overall performance and efficiency of city government.

Project Team: Peg Stevenson, City Performance Director
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City and County of San Francisco

Office of the Controller - City Services Auditor

Better Streets Plan: Recommendations for Improved Streetscape Project Planning, Design, Review and Approval

1/19/10

Purpose of the Report: The Better Streets and Complete Streets Policies, passed in 2005 and 2006, call for City departments to work together to improve the functioning and aesthetic of our City's streets to meet social, recreational, transportation, and ecological goals. The Better Streets Plan (BSP), currently in draft form, provides a comprehensive set of street design guidelines to meet these goals. Recommendations of this report for improved project planning, design, and approval are intended to assist the City in implementing the BSP guidelines in a consistent and efficient manner.

Existing Conditions and Challenges

1. Streetscape projects are financed by phase through a patchwork of sources. Though projects are planned assuming an ideal flow of funding that would allow work to continue from one phase to the next in a timely manner, in practice funding must be secured several times throughout the life of the project. Any funding delays in the early phases extend the overall project timeline. Project funding also usually does not include long-term operations and maintenance costs.

2. Responsibilities for streetscape project planning, design, approval, construction, and maintenance are shared by many City departments. Departments' capital plans and project management systems track paving, transit route updates, and area plans individually rather than geographically, and are updated at different intervals. Although departments do coordinate, no formal framework exists to encourage City departments to collaborate on project prioritization and design and make necessary compromises (at the department level) to support citywide goals.

3. Project design negotiations occurring at later phases of project design lead to significant redesign and project delay. Lack of coordination and agreement by all departments with approval authority at the conceptual phase inevitably requires redesign and project delay.

4. Internal City challenges are amplified for members of the public interested in developing streetscape projects. The approval process is highly technical and complex, and is particularly confusing to the general public. Currently no single "City" point of contact exists for the public, which may result in confusing or inconsistent guidance from City departments.

Recommendations

City departments including the Department of Public Works (DPW), the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA), the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC), and the Planning Department (PLN) can and should pursue the following immediately and independently:

- Communicate to all staff the importance of organized coordination to meet citywide objectives.
- Ensure department guidance and permitting practices are consistent with the BSP.
- Require that project managers create sufficient documentation regarding decisions made throughout project development.
- Ensure that "complete streets" opportunities are identified during each department's corridor planning, project initiation, scoping and general programming.

Together, DPW, SFMTA, SFPUC, PLN with the General Services Agency should take lead in implementing the following:

- Create and institute an efficient and thorough project design process to increase the consistency of proactive outreach by project managers to City experts and public stakeholders during the project concept phase.
- Increase consideration of capital and maintenance costs in planning and project development efforts.
- Pilot the Advanced Planning for Streetscape Capital and Design Review Teams, two interdepartmental groups organized around clear outcomes, members, and responsibilities.
- Consolidate meaningful streetscape planning and delivery resources to guide private developers and community partners.

Copies of the full report may be obtained at:

Controller's Office • City Hall, Room 316 • 1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place • San Francisco, CA 94102 • 415.554.7500
or on the Internet at <http://www.sfgov.org/controller>

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CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO
OFFICE OF THE CONTROLLER

Ben Rosenfield
Controller

Monique Zmuda
Deputy Controller

January 19, 2010

The Controller's Office, City Services Auditor, presents its recommendations regarding the Better Streets Plan for improved project planning, design, and approval. The objectives were to recommend process improvements for the City to:

- Streamline the streetscape improvement design and approval process;
- Better leverage and track funding for streetscape improvement projects;
- Increase our understanding and planning for streetscape maintenance costs; and
- Support community and private streetscape projects and partnerships.

We found four challenges to efficient design and delivery of streetscape projects, including:

- Patchwork financing of streetscape projects;
- Shared responsibilities for a single streetscape project's planning, design, delivery and maintenance;
- The tendency to negotiate project design compromises late in the permitting process, which leads to significant redesign and delay; and
- Our limited external customer orientation, which amplifies these challenges for members of the public interested in developing streetscape projects.

This report includes eight recommendations for City departments to implement individually and collectively to achieve the stated project objectives. These include improved project management within departments; formalized interdepartmental collaboration; and the development of meaningful information and guidance for the public. A follow up report will be released in the spring of 2010 regarding how the City can economize and improve its funding and maintenance of streetscapes.

We appreciate the assistance and cooperation of the Director's Working Group* and City department staff provided to us during this project.

Respectfully submitted,

Ben Rosenfield
Controller

cc: Mayor
Board of Supervisors
Civil Grand Jury
Budget Analyst
Public Library

*This advisory body includes Department heads from the Department of Public Works, the General Services Agency, the Mayor's Office on Disability, the Planning Department, the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency, the Recreation and Park Department, and the San Francisco County Transportation Authority.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AC	San Francisco Arts Commission
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
APSCap	Advanced Planning for Streetscape Capital
BOS	San Francisco Board of Supervisors
BSM	Bureau of Street Use and Mapping
BSP	Better Streets Plan
CA	City Administrator's Office
CAC	Community Advisory Committee
CCSF	City and County of San Francisco (or "City")
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
CSA	City Services Auditor
DPH	Department of Public Health
DPW	Department of Public Works
DT	Department of Technology
DWG	Director's Working Group
GSA	General Services Agency
HRC	Human Rights Commission
ISCOTT	Interdepartmental Staff Committee on Traffic and Transportation
MOD	Mayor's Office on Disability
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
PLN	San Francisco Planning Department
SFCTA	San Francisco County Transportation Authority
SDRT	Streetscape Design Review Team
SFFD	San Francisco Fire Department
SFPD	San Francisco Police Department
SFMTA	San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency
SFPUC	San Francisco Public Utilities Commission
SFRA	San Francisco Redevelopment Agency
TAC	Technical Advisory Committee
TASC	Transportation Advisory Staff Committee

DEFINITIONS

Complete Street	Complete streets are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users and balance safety and convenience for everyone using the road. Instituting a complete streets policy ensures that transportation agencies routinely design and operate the entire right-of-way to enable safe access for all users including drivers, transit users, pedestrians, and bicyclists, as well as for older people, children, and people with disabilities. What it takes to make a street "complete" varies depending on many factors: there is no single definition. However, components may include sidewalks, bike lanes (or wide paved shoulders), special bus lanes, comfortable and accessible transit stops, frequent crossing opportunities, median islands, accessible pedestrian signals, and curb extensions.
Complete Streets Policy	The Complete Streets Policy (Section 2.4.13 of the Public Works Code) directs the City to include pedestrian, bicycle, and streetscape improvements as part of any planning or construction of the right-of-way.
Better Streets Plan	The Better Streets Plan (BSP) is a comprehensive set of standards, guidelines, and implementation strategies to govern how the City designs, builds, and maintains its pedestrian environment. As of this report, the Better Streets Plan is in draft form; it is expected to be adopted in 2010.
Better Streets Policy	Chapter 98 of the City's Administrative Code contains a Better Streets Policy for San Francisco, adopted in 2005. This policy recognizes that streets are for all types of transportation, particularly walking, bicycling, and transit. It also requires City agencies to coordinate the planning, design and use of public rights-of-way to carry out the vision for streets contained in the policy, which is to design City streets in keeping with the City's General and Area Plans and the City's Transit First Policy, best practices in environmental planning and pedestrian-oriented, multi-modal street design, and incorporation of sustainable water management techniques to ensure continued quality of life, economic well-being, and environmental health in San Francisco.
Transit First Policy	The Board of Supervisors initially adopted the Transit First

Policy in 1973 in response to the growing challenge of automobile traffic congestion. In 1999, San Francisco voters approved Proposition E, which amended the City Charter to strengthen the policy by making it the City's primary transportation policy framework. The Transit First Policy states that the City should prioritize street improvements that enhance travel by public transit, by bicycle and on foot as an attractive alternative to travel by private automobile.

Design Engineer
(Public or Private)

Design engineer is a general term that covers multiple engineering disciplines including electrical, mechanical, civil, and architectural. The role of the design engineer is the creation, synthesis, iteration, and presentation of design solutions. The design engineer coordinates with engineering specialists and integrates their input to produce the form, fit and function documentation to completely define the product.

Project Manager
(Public or Private)

Project manager is a general term for a professional with the responsibility for the planning, execution, and closing of any project. The project manager is the person accountable for accomplishing the stated project objectives. Key project management responsibilities include creating clear and attainable project objectives, building the project requirements, and managing the triple constraint for projects, which is cost, time, and scope.

Conceptual Plan

A design illustrating general dimensions, transportation characteristics, and location of streetscape elements. Not generally based on a detailed engineering survey.

Engineering Design

A design at the level of engineering or construction drawings, including specific dimensions, utility plans, slope and drainage, plantings and materials, and other technical specifications. Typically based on a detailed engineering survey.

INTRODUCTION

Overview

The Better Streets and Complete Streets policies, passed in 2005 and 2006, call for departments in the City and County of San Francisco (City) to work together to improve the functioning and aesthetic of our City's streets to meet social, recreational, transportation, and ecological goals. The Better Streets Plan (BSP), currently in draft form, provides a comprehensive set of street design guidelines to meet these goals. To implement the guidelines in a consistent and coordinated manner the City is also taking steps to improve its streets project delivery process, beginning with the conceptual project planning, through detailed technical design and approval to construction. Hundreds of City-or private developer-projects are in any one of those planning, design or construction phases each year. Projects vary in scope but may include aspects such as sidewalk reconstruction or widening, sidewalk bulb-outs, sidewalk lighting, widened medians, tree planting and the installation of public artwork.

This paper describes the current system through which City departments collaborate to deliver street improvement projects and recommends methods to streamline their planning, design and approval processes.

Recommendations are process-focused and intend to bring increased clarity regarding department roles, responsibilities, and requirements; formality to existing interdepartmental collaboration; and transparency to City decision-making regarding street improvement projects. Recommendations suggest practical, incremental and financially feasible steps to fully implement the intent of the Better Streets and Complete Streets policies.

Project Initiation

The Directors Working Group¹ requested from the Office of the Controller, City Services Auditor (CSA) an analysis of existing processes and recommendations for the City to 1) streamline the streetscape improvement design and approval process; 2) better leverage and track funding for streetscape improvement projects; 3) increase

¹ The Directors Working Group is composed of the directors of the City Administrator's Office (CA), Department of Public Works (DPW), San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC), Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA), Planning Department (PLN), San Francisco County Transportation Authority (SFCTA), and Mayor's Office on Disability (MOD).

understanding and planning for the maintenance costs of existing streetscape features and those associated with “better” streets; and 4) support community and private streetscape projects and partnerships through permitting.

Approach

In collaboration with the Better Streets Coordination Team,² CSA staff selected six street improvement projects to examine as case studies of existing planning, design and review processes, and document challenges and identify opportunities. Of the six selected projects, four were led by City departments, one was led by a private developer, and one was led by a private citizen. These included streetscape projects varying in length (one to six blocks), budget (\$1 to \$7 million dollars) and delivery schedule duration (two to five years). These projects included various pedestrian amenities and safety features such as wide sidewalks, curb extensions or bulb-outs, prominently marked crosswalks, pedestrian-level lighting, seating, and street trees or other landscaping.

As a follow-up to reviewing the six street improvement projects, CSA interviewed project managers and City staff in the San Francisco Planning Department, Department of Public Works, Municipal Transportation Agency, and the Public Utilities Commission.³ CSA also reviewed the business practices instituted to increase multi-departmental collaboration by the cities of Charlotte, Portland, Seattle, Washington, D.C., and Sacramento – cities recognized for their leadership in this area. Finally, CSA has hired a private firm to develop a model for the City to better understand the life-cycle costs of maintaining its streetscapes and provide recommendations regarding funding options for San Francisco’s streetscape maintenance activities (to be completed in spring 2010).

² The Better Streets Coordination Team is composed of project management staff from DPW, SFPUC, SFMTA, PLN, SFCTA, Department of Public Health and the Mayor’s Office of Greening.

³ These are the primary departments involved in streetscape planning, design, review and construction.

Summary Table of Improvement Projects Reviewed

Project	Project Lead Department	Scope of Improvements	Planning Timeframe
Valencia Avenue Streetscape Improvement Project	DPW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Widened sidewalks • Corner bulbs • Pedestrian lighting • Street trees • Bike racks • Art elements • Loading zones 	2006-2008
Leland Avenue Streetscape Improvement Project	PLN &DPW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corner bulbs • Landscaping • Special pavement • Pedestrian lighting • Undergrounding of utilities • Gateway • Stormwater planters & pervious paving • Seating, art elements 	2005-2007
Rincon Hill Streetscapes as part of the Rincon Hill Area Plan	PLN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sidewalk widening • Corner bulbs • Landscaping • Special paving • Pedestrian lighting • Other streetscape furnishings 	2003-2005
Linden Living Alley	Private Citizen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Widened sidewalks • Repaving • Installation of seating • Lighting • Landscaping • Bike racks 	2006-Halted
Mint Plaza	Private Developer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Street closure • Stormwater management • Landscaping • Seating 	2005-2007
Tenderloin/UN Plaza/Civic Center BART Pedestrian Improvements	SFMTA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corner bulbs • Bus bulbs • Related traffic striping at several locations 	2005-2007

Source: Interviews with project managers held in 2009.

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BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

What is the Better Streets Plan?

The Better Streets Plan (BSP), currently in draft form and undergoing environmental review, creates a unified set of guidelines to govern how the City designs, builds and maintains its walking environment. The BSP includes standard and optional pedestrian improvements to be included when the City undertakes or approves a street improvement project. Though most of the City's streets include basic pedestrian infrastructure such as sidewalks and marked crosswalks, the ease of walking varies by neighborhood. Neighborhoods have varying block lengths, density and quality of crosswalks, and degrees of traffic which affect the amount of pedestrian usage. Approximately 20 percent of the City's estimated 4.5 million daily trips occur on foot. This estimate does not include the 17 percent made on transit which begin and end on foot.⁴ Building street improvements into the standards of the BSP would represent a significant step in the policy direction set by the Transit First, Better Streets and Complete Streets Policies.

What are the Transit First, Better Streets, and Complete Streets Policies?

Locally, San Francisco has passed three broad policies to direct overall City planning and design. The Transit-First Policy (City Charter, 1973) directs the City to prioritize street improvements that enhance transit, pedestrian, bicycle, and carpool trips over other transportation modes. More recently, the Better Streets Policy (Administrative Code, 2005) directs the City to design City streets in keeping with the Transit First Policy and best practices in environmental planning⁵ and pedestrian-oriented multi-modal street design, and requires City agencies to coordinate the planning, design and use of the public right-of-way. The Complete Streets Policy (Public Works Code, 2006) directs the City to include transit, pedestrian, and bicycle improvements whenever the City undertakes any planning, repaving or construction in the right-of-way. Additional City policies can be found in the San Francisco General Plan and its constituent elements.

The BSP offers a framework to consider the appropriateness of different suggested street designs or

⁴ San Francisco County Transportation Authority, San Francisco Mode Split for all Trips, 2000.

⁵ Best practices in environmental planning include methods determined to be the most effective and practical means of preventing or reducing pollution.

treatments given site-specific uses; levels of pedestrian, bicycle, transit and auto circulation; and the desired outcomes for each site. Desired outcomes may include but are not limited to improved access or safety, increased street connectivity, improved ecological performance, or sense of community. Upon adoption, the BSP will be implemented by City departments with jurisdiction over design, construction, and management of the public-right-of-way as they incorporate BSP recommendations into their existing work plans. City departments with this authority include PLN,⁶ SFMTA, DPW, SFPUC, and the Port of San Francisco (Port). Additionally, the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency (SFRA) and the SFCTA are legally separate from the City but perform similar development and construction functions exclusively for the City, and thus are authorized to construct projects in the public right-of-way. Similarly, the Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board (Caltrain), the Bay Area Rapid Transit District (BART), the California Department of Transportation (CalTrans), and the Transbay Joint Powers Authority also impact the city's streetscape through the major infrastructure projects they develop, though these agencies are generally independent of City jurisdiction. All of these entities conduct planning and design activities in accordance with their respective unique missions in the public right-of-way, which encompass vital and interrelated systems such as roads and streets, signage, sewers, traffic signals, and structures from building line to building line. Hence, it is necessary that these entities coordinate to allow the City to create appropriate street improvements in a timely and cost-effective manner.

Street design in San Francisco is subject to federal, state, and local policies, standards, and guidelines. Key federal and state policies and standards include the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices, the American Association of State and Highway Transportation Officials standards, the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Clean Water Act. All existing City standards relating to street design can be found in the San Francisco Administrative Code, Building Code, Fire Code, Planning Code, Public Works Code,

⁶ The Planning Department role in project implementation is in project-specific planning and design, not construction.

Traffic Code, and in departmental orders and standard plans. These standards are implemented through ongoing projects and programs led by DPW, SFMTA, PLN, SFRA, and SFPUC. Other bodies such as the Arts Commission (AC) and Mayor's Office on Disability (MOD) provide policy guidance regarding the artistic quality and accessibility of street designs. The San Francisco Police Department (SFPD) and the San Francisco Fire Department (SFFD) review plans to ensure designs do not interfere with the delivery of essential public safety services. All standards also guide private development projects which are reviewed and approved by the appropriate City departments as part of development proposals, as well as community-initiated changes to the public right-of-way. In some instances, City departments may need to provide additional guidance to reconcile implementation of the BSP and applicable law and regulations.

What is the Existing Project Development Process?

Projects generally begin at the conceptual plan stage, go through a plan review and approval process, and eventually become final engineered construction plans. Three distinct phases are included in the process: 1. Project Development, 2. Engineering Plan Development, and 3. Approval of Plans and Specifications.⁷ These phases are applicable to projects led by City departments, other public agencies, and those led by private developers or members of the public. The graphic contained within Appendix A (City Street Design and Approval Process) illustrates key activities and departments involved within each phase.

Within the City, individual departments identify projects through ongoing internal long-range capital planning which is informed by asset management programs and community planning processes. This advanced project planning allows departments to budget and staff these projects. Departments may prioritize projects for reasons including the need to make immediate repairs, to optimize funding, or at the direction of the Mayor's Office, the Board of Supervisors, or individual department boards or commissions. This work takes place prior to Phase 1.

Phase 1 of Appendix A represents the development of a conceptual project's design. During this phase, lead

⁷ Individual City departments described their planning and design phases differently. For example, DPW staff generally describes their phases as Planning, Design and Construction. SFMTA staff describes their process as Planning, Funding, Design and Permits, and finally Construction.

departments may consult with other departments, agencies, and other stakeholders including residents, property owners and businesses. During **Phase 2**, a department design engineer converts the conceptual plan into an engineering design plans. This is an iterative process, where designs are refined through feedback and information provided through the early consultations with stakeholders. For City-led street improvement projects, DPW typically takes the lead in converting the conceptual plan into an engineering design plans, though any City department may lead initial project planning and project conceptualization. For non-City led projects, an engineering firm is hired to draw up the plans. During this second phase, all affected City departments and private utilities generally provide a comprehensive evaluation of the proposed construction plans to the lead department to avoid any design or timing conflicts. **Phase 3** comprises the approvals that City departments must provide for all project designs. Similar to Phase 2, Phase 3 is an iterative process, where designs are refined based on the feedback received from the permitting and approval bodies. The approval process ensures that all projects are suitable for construction. For City-led street improvement projects involving multiple departments, DPW typically takes the lead in resolving any design conflicts raised through the approval process. However, the SFMTA or SFPUC may implement projects as well. For non-City-led projects, private developers interact directly with individual City departments to resolve design conflicts. Phases 2 and 3 often involve significant overlap. All projects must receive approvals from:

- DPW's Bureau of Street Use and Mapping (BSM) to ensure the project will not degrade the safety or accessibility of City streets and sidewalks;
- PLN to ensure consistency with the City's General Plan and compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act and historical preservation requirements;
- Human Rights Commission (HRC) to ensure compliance with the City's contracting ordinances;

- DPW to ensure consistency with federal accessibility standards;⁸ and
- AC to ensure the artistic quality of the design of structures on City property.
- BOS to review and legislate any sidewalk changes, subject to the advice of TASC.

Concurrently, designs may undergo additional environmental review and require other approvals, for example, if they involve national landmarks or roadways under the jurisdiction of the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). Caltrans and the Federal Highway Administration must review and approve projects receiving any amount of federal funding.

Typically, the review process happens sequentially. Towards the end of this most administrative phase, (Phase 3), the City prepares the final set of construction documents and the final construction cost estimate. For non-City-led projects, the final permit fee estimate is calculated. Once the City department or private contractor completes this last administrative phase, the project is ready to proceed to construction.

⁸ DPW reviews individual projects for technical compatibility with the Americans with Disability Act (ADA); the Mayor's Office on Disability (MOD) sets the general policy regarding ADA compliance.

**Office of the Controller, City Services Auditor
Recommendations for Improved Streetscape Project Planning, Design, Review and Approval**

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ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

1. Streetscapes are financed by phase through a patchwork of sources.

Though projects are planned assuming an ideal flow of funding that would allow work to continue one phase to the next in a timely manner, in practice funding must be secured several times throughout the life of the project. Any funding delays in the early phases extend the overall project timeline.

At the far right of Appendix A, a placeholder exists for the budget for each phase (Project Development, Engineering Plan Development, and Construction). This approach allows projects to move forward as soon as planning and design funds are secured. However, in speaking with City staff, lags in securing funding for each phase can delay the eventual start date for construction. According to one project manager, securing funding three times using three different sources to fund a full project is not uncommon. Another stated the missed opportunities for funding and project coordination due to lack of coordination of capital planning. Funds such as Prop K sales tax and Transportation for Livable Communities grants are programmed to pay for several elements of the streetscape projects years in advance. Using Prop K funding as an example, the advanced programming is largely determined by departments through the SFCTA's 5-year planning process. This requires some longer term planning on the part of City departments. The short-term budgeting approach results in the grant, formula, or single-source funding criteria driving the design more than the original vision, as more flexible funds to "complement" these "pre-programmed" funds are more difficult to find.

Currently, no City staff is dedicated to strategically coordinate the multiple funding sources, determine funding eligibility, or balance the requirements of each funding source needed to fund a truly complete street – project managers weave together the needed funding as best they can. One project manager mentioned that having a better understanding of the project's stormwater needs in advance would have allowed for a request to the SFPUC for funding. Another manager found in retrospect that "considering whether or not to use local or federal funds at the beginning

would have been helpful; in our case, using only local would have been best." Though local, relatively "flexible" dollars are easier to work with, (in terms of required review, documentation, and analysis of environmental impacts) the City must develop projects in a manner that allows them to take advantage of state or federal dollars that may become available. This should involve the need to keep NEPA clearance in mind as the project progresses through earlier development phases.

A related issue is that few funding sources are available to pay for maintenance. This will be reviewed and elaborated on in the second half of this project, with recommendations presented in spring 2010. Regarding streetscape financing and advanced capital planning, it is important to note that while any City department may lead initial project planning and project conceptualization, they are not always responsible for estimating the long-term and ongoing maintenance costs of the design.⁹ Departments have expressed a desire to build the capacity to determine the true lifecycle costs of streetscape elements or weigh the costs and benefits of status quo investments such as concrete, asphalt or existing street lamps against those needed for newer, greener sustainable infrastructure such as special pavers or pedestrian lighting. This is also a large focus on the second half of this project.

2. Responsibilities for streetscape project planning, design, delivery and maintenance are shared by many City departments.

The overall design and project coordination is not one department's focus. Departments have capital plans and project management systems which track paving, transit route updates and area plans individually rather than geographically, and are updated at different intervals. As individual departments' projects evolve, funding or design opportunities may change and require regular and on-going coordinating by departments to avoid missed opportunities to combine or co-locate projects to maximize funding or impact. Traditionally, it has been the responsibility of individual project managers to ensure review and approval by all relevant bodies. However, no clear guidance exists on this topic for project managers.

These responsibilities are organized by function, including planning, engineering, construction, maintenance and oversight of the public right-of-way. (See Appendix B for a

⁹ DPW, SFPUC, and for some projects, SFMTA plan, design, develop and construct projects.

table summarizing City department roles and responsibilities in managing the public right-of-way.) In some instances, City departments coordinate their planned and approved projects; for example, when several projects along the same corridor can minimize the construction impacts within the neighborhood. This coordination is largely focused on avoiding construction conflicts, rather than conducting strategic planning. This alignment of several departments' individually-conceived projects into a single design typically requires several iterations of design to accommodate departments' individual resource constraints, timelines and desired outcomes.

Collaboration in street improvement projects is typically structured through Technical Advisory Committees (TACs), or project-focused groups involving several City department representatives. TACs generally provide technical assistance to project and design development, and ensure practical coordination among planning, engineering and finance staff, and private utilities.¹⁰ This collaborative approach is typically ad-hoc (not institutionalized) and dependent on the information shared by between participating TAC members. TACs are typically convened at the discretion of an individual project manager.

The Transportation Advisory Staff Committee (TASC) is an established coordinating body which meets on a regular basis, twice a month. Chaired by SFMTA Traffic Engineering Group, TASC consists of representatives of other City departments (including DPW, SFFD, PLN, SFPD, DPH, and Port). Advisory in nature, TASC provides an opportunity for City staff to comment on proposed street improvement projects, including design details such as precise lane widths and curb heights, exact signage placement, and compatibility with emergency response plans. TASC focus is on transportation issues, and is not generally interested with other street issues such as stormwater management or urban design. Proposed improvements may need modification and discussion at more than one meeting. Though TASC welcomes project presentations at any phase, TASC typically reviews proposed improvements when they are in their final design phase to ensure they do not interfere with other current and

¹⁰ Similar to TACs, Citizen Advisory Committees consisting of neighborhood or public stakeholders are often used in projects to coordinate and collect and address public concerns.

projected transportation uses, especially the delivery of essential services (e.g., Fire and Police response, and Muni etc.).

Responding to the need for a more formal coordinated process, larger projects, such as the Mission Bay Redevelopment Project, have formalized their ongoing planning and collaboration through a formal interagency Memorandum of Understanding between all departments involved, which commit those departments to the Mission Bay Infrastructure Plans. Also, a number of interdepartmental working groups and standing committees exist to achieve similar information sharing and advance planning. (See Appendix C for a list of existing inter-departmental working groups, their focus, authority and participants.)

From a manager's point of view, the City staff members with the relevant technical information and approval authority that may impact a design or project and their willingness to collaborate are the most valuable resources. One project manager anticipated that the BSP guidelines, as well as other published City street design guidance, may replace some but not all of the guidance provided by TAC members. Another noted the importance of meetings held face to face to increase the thoughtfulness of feedback provided to a design engineer, and to build better relationships and stronger commitments to the project being presented by key parties and decision makers. This is believed to reduce the miscommunication about what is permissible and what is not.

Although departments do coordinate, no formal framework exists to allow and encourage City departments to negotiate project design components and make necessary compromises (at the department level) to support citywide goals. Without a formal framework and clear guidance, City departments move forward on projects independently, which can result in different outcomes and has been a reported source of tension among departments and delays. As funding often takes years to secure, early knowledge of the possible constraints, such as DPW's repaving schedule or Muni's long term plans, can be incorporated into the scope of a project.

3. Project design

negotiations occurring at later phases of project design lead to significant redesign and project delay.

Though more information eases the understanding of the project scope among those that must approve a design, moving too quickly to the detailed drawings without consulting with the approval bodies often requires redesign.

Streetscape projects are reviewed and approved for consistency with the City's general plan, historic preservation goals, federal accessibility standards, proposed transportation changes, and state (CEQA) and national (if applicable) environmental standards (see Appendix A, Phase 3 for the approving departments). As part of this review process, project managers must provide a significant amount of design detail about the streetscape project to the reviewing and approving bodies. In Appendix A, the degree of detail needed is represented by the second column from the left that describes the current design review process. With significant detail in hand, approving bodies can raise specific concerns and can clarify the standards needed for approval and suggest resolutions. Logistically, this review process may result in additional redesign costs, and a design that is more "standard" than originally intended. This results in confusion and a perception of the original design being compromised, and of "some not being on board with the Mayor's directive to be more innovative."

The lack of widespread understanding of the citywide policies guiding design is a source of frustration for City and private designers and project managers. In order to increase their understanding of the requirements, standards and approval process, both public and private designers seek clearer information about the application and interpretation of standards and policies (the Better Streets and Complete Streets policies in particular) to projects. For example, no guidance exists regarding the appropriate coordination of public, commercial and private transportation needs, or how to balance the needs of each mode against the others in our limited right-of-way. Also, with Level of Service (LOS) serving as the primary quantitative performance measure used to judge possible impacts on the street system, the movement of traffic is typically prioritized over other policy objectives with less easily quantifiable performance measures. A collaborative effort involving the SFCTA, PLN and other public agencies

to develop an alternative performance measure for LOS is underway. No measures of success exist for streetscape projects. Project cost efficiency and ongoing operational or environmental benefits are two measures City departments would like to see used more often. According to project managers, the movement of emergency and Muni vehicles is often prioritized over other street uses.

4. Internal City challenges are amplified for members of the public interested in developing streetscape projects.

Not surprisingly, this process is most confusing to the general public which views the City as a monolithic entity, rather than the individual departments depicted in the process in Appendix A.

Private residents and developers in particular, place a premium on receiving clear guidance and timely information in order to maximize returns and minimize delay and exposure to risk. Unfortunately, no City timelines exist for approving agencies to act (see the “Timeline” column in Appendix A). In the City, there is no formally established forum for the public and City to discuss project design requirements and responsibility for ongoing maintenance or liability. As a result, project managers have contacted any City employee willing to lend assistance and information regardless of the employee’s department, leading to sometimes conflicting communications. The lack of formal framework and clear guidance has been a reported source of tension between the public and “the City.” Property owners, community leaders or private developers with more experience may be able to effectively collaborate, coordinate and expedite the design review process in Phase 3. Those individuals with less experience and/or pursuing a relatively small greening project may become discouraged by the process; and even those with significant knowledge of the process may be dissuaded from proposing improvements or following through on building those improvements by the complexity of the process.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The approaches of other states, municipal planning organizations and cities provide a vision of how San Francisco could redesign and manage street projects to accommodate all functions of the public right-of-way. Governments promote complete streets through policy level guidelines, design manuals, strategic plans and plan amendments. (See Appendix D for a summary of peer approaches to streetscape planning and design.)

Informed by the efforts of other cities and in collaboration with the DWG, Better Streets Coordination Team and other City staff, the following recommendations provide a conceptual path to develop integrated projects that balance the City's goals, plans and values within a difficult budget environment. The following recommendations consider existing streetscape delivery challenges and the need to address the goals of the BSP. (Recommendations regarding streetscape maintenance and funding – objectives 2 & 3 – will be provided in spring 2010.)

A. Recommendations for all Relevant City Departments

These are recommendations departments such as DPW, SFMTA, SFPUC, and PLN can and should pursue immediately and independently.

A1. City department heads should communicate to management the importance of organized coordination to meet citywide objectives.

Balancing the multiple interests that use the public right-of-way will require ongoing collaboration; therefore it is important to identify this as a responsibility of management, planning and project delivery staff. In the same vein, department heads should direct management to coordinate internally before representing the department in interdepartmental efforts, so that the department is represented by a single voice. Maintaining continuity in leadership direction and understanding of key Better Streets, Complete Streets and BSP goals and principles will be necessary as management personnel change over time.

A2. City department management should ensure guidance provided and permitting practices are consistent with the BSP.

Permitting bodies in particular should modify existing guidance per practices regarding environmental, ADA, and BSM compliance in light of the forthcoming BSP design standards. The BSP emphasizes flexibility and choice for design engineers to arrive at solutions that reflect the needs of each place, and satisfy broad goals that call for "livability," "improved connectivity," and "enhanced environmental quality." Clarifying a project's adherence to appropriate standards minimizes the risk of the City as well as the private developer. Clear guidelines for public and private project managers on proper interpretation of federal and local accessibility requirements of federal regulations, and departmental and MOD policies¹¹ would complement the BSP guidelines. City Departments should ensure that staff is sufficiently trained and educated on applicable standards to ensure consistent guidance. Similarly, department efforts to support consistent streetscape design and standards should also be identified and shared citywide. For example, DPW is in the process of developing a "palette" or set of standard materials, finishes, and street furniture to promote and facilitate use of stock items which the department can maintain. This stands to benefit design engineers, project managers and DPW alike.

A3. City department project managers should ensure that decisions regarding project development are sufficiently documented.

Project initiation and scoping meetings in particular should document decisions regarding the project objective, strategies considered to create a more "complete street" and the evolution of the project throughout the planning project development activities. The intent is to maximize project integration, coordination, and accountability. Documentation of decisions and the process will allow for identification of bottlenecks and development of more realistic planning and approval timeframes. Also, sufficient documentation should alleviate miscommunication that typically does not surface until the designs are already well developed and increase the accountability of all entities participating in the project development. Finally, as the BSP provides guidelines, not standards, it is important to document agreements and outcomes in order to update City standards, as needed.

¹¹ The Public Rights-of-Way Access Advisory Committee of the US Access Board has developed a technical assistance manual which illustrates accessible public rights-of-way, planning and design for alterations could serve as a model.

A4. All City staff should ensure that “complete streets” opportunities are identified during their department’s corridor planning, project initiation, scoping and general programming.

All City staff should raise opportunities to include pedestrian, bicycle, transit, and greening amenities in both emergency and routine construction. Training and education on the parameters of “better” and “complete” streets projects will enable staff to recommend such opportunities that can be incorporated into a department’s workplan. The SFPUC has invested in an asset management model that may be tailored to serve the city in a more comprehensive manner. Similarly, with assistance from the Department of Technology, DPW’s 5-year Plan database may be expanded to record all city projects planned for the public right-of-way, regardless of the department taking the lead.

B. Citywide Recommendations

The following recommendations require City departments to refine and implement interdepartmental collaboration. This should include departments such as DPW, SFMTA, SFPUC, PLN and others as needed.

B1. Create and institute a unified project design checklist to increase the consistency of proactive outreach by project managers to City experts during the project concept phase.

Experienced project managers regularly reach out to other department staff during the project concept and project development stage. Newer project managers interviewed for this project identified that, in hindsight, early internal outreach and consultation with the City’s technical experts could have benefitted the development of their project in terms of quality and process efficiency in the subsequent approval phase. The New York City Department of Transportation has developed a design checklist for projects in the public-right-of-way. The checklist requires a designer to define the context, and give appropriate consideration to the full range of factors that should inform the street’s design. The City and County of San Francisco may consider developing a similar, though more detailed, checklist which can include a list of individuals and departments with whom a project manager should communicate at different stages of project design.

This would serve multiple purposes including 1) collecting valuable information from other City departments about what should be included in a project’s scope, 2) identifying issues that may prohibit a design from approval during Phase 3, and 3) increasing the accountability of those weighing in on the project design as it develops. The Planning Department has

recently developed a similar form, the Pre-Application Information Packet & Interdepartmental Project Review (related to new construction or alteration of buildings).

B2. Increase the profile of design and cost (operations & maintenance) considerations in interdepartmental planning and project development efforts.

Several of the City's interdepartmental efforts focus on early collaboration for the purpose of project timing, (see Appendix C for the complete listing of efforts). However, it is equally important for the City to consider the costs of a project's ongoing maintenance and likely lifespan. Early design development should consider designs, treatments and materials likely to reduce ongoing maintenance costs for the responsible entity. Early communication during the design phase of a project about the likely cost of the delivered product manages expectations for all departments involved. Interdepartmental planning groups should include representation of the divisions responsible for maintenance at DPW, SFPUC and SFMTA. (Recommendations in February 2010 will provide further guidance regarding tools to estimate the life-cycle costs of various treatments.)

B3. Pilot formally-framed interdepartmental collaboration with clear outcomes, membership and responsibilities.

A number of cities including Sacramento, Portland, Washington D.C. and Seattle have instituted on-going multi-bureau teams to ensure interdepartmental coordination during street improvement project delivery. Focused on the continuous improvement of the City's streetscape planning and design standards and process in an orchestrated way, these groups have taken advantage of new best practices and innovations while preserving the benefits of standardization. Two areas where "multi-bureau" groups would provide added benefit to public and private projects include 1) advanced planning for streetscape capital funding, and 2) identification of a core group of City staff charged with approving designs and developing guidance provided to all project managers, (public and private). This more disciplined planning is intended to realize efficiencies in design, review, and outreach.

Advanced Planning for Streetscape Capital

This primary purpose of the **Advanced Planning for Streetscape Capital** (APSCap) group is to coordinate street improvement projects in order to realize cost efficiencies and project completeness; identify opportunities for coordination of existing projects; and ensure that available funding goes toward citywide

priorities. This includes collaboratively planning streetscape projects of mutual benefit to City departments using available data, plans and priorities as a foundation. APSCap should ensure streetscape projects are planned consistent with an appropriate funding program. Further, it should provide interdepartmental information on available funding programs that may address multiple streetscape needs (e.g. capital, maintenance, pedestrian, transit). This group should be responsible for the collaborative identification of overlapping department priorities and development of projects coordinated according to priority criteria. It should also keep a list of City priorities for street improvements for use as new funding opportunities arise, and ensure that project plans include a long-term maintenance plan and they are developed with enough detail for departments to factor them into department Capital Improvement Plans. The opportunity for advanced funding may serve as an incentive for departments to collaborate.

Earlier this year, the DWG initiated a subcommittee essentially defining APSCap's purpose, process and responsibilities. Including staff from DPW, SFMTA, SFPUC, PLN, SFCTA and the Capital Planning Group, APSCap would operate under the DWG. Due to its membership and charge, this group could effectively support existing interdepartmental groups including the Committee for Utility and Liaison on Construction and other Projects, the Integrated Plan Implementation Committee, and the group updating the Prop K Strategic Plan and the 5-Year Prioritization Programs. A draft of particular roles and responsibilities of each member are included in Appendix E. Anticipating the coordination, scheduling, documentation and follow up needed, an administrator should be identified to ensure steady progress. The identification and public notice of this group's members and outcomes should assist the public in better understanding the City's plans, priorities and opportunities to partner.

Streetscape Design Review Team

The primary purpose of the second multi-bureau team, the **Streetscape Design Review Team** (SDRT) is to serve as an oversight body for citywide implementation of the BSP. Filling the need for the resolution of policy conflicts and project-specific conflicts that involve City

departments and other local agencies and stakeholders, SDRT would likewise report to a citywide administrative body, the DWG. Applying the BSP guidelines to projects may require additional interdepartmental discussion, higher level resolution, additional guidance or recommended revisions to City codes. Serving as the clearinghouse for review of streetscape projects, SDRT would provide the forum for high-level decision-making to guide design engineers from concept through to detailed design for design engineers. Membership should include the City staff most knowledgeable regarding City standards and the approvals projects currently required, from departments currently providing guidance. This body would assist in the design review of major projects, and develop the body of knowledge to increase the clarity of what is allowable. Appendix F includes a description of the specific roles and responsibilities of each member. This should include the following departments: DPW, SFMTA, SFPUC, PLN, and MOD. As with APSCap, the coordination, scheduling, documentation and follow up needed will require an administrator to ensure steady progress.

Appendix G, (Recommended City Street Design and Approval Process) provides a visual representation of where both of these groups would sit within the existing process.

B4. Consolidate meaningful streetscape planning and delivery resources into single location to guide private developers and encourage more public/private partnerships.

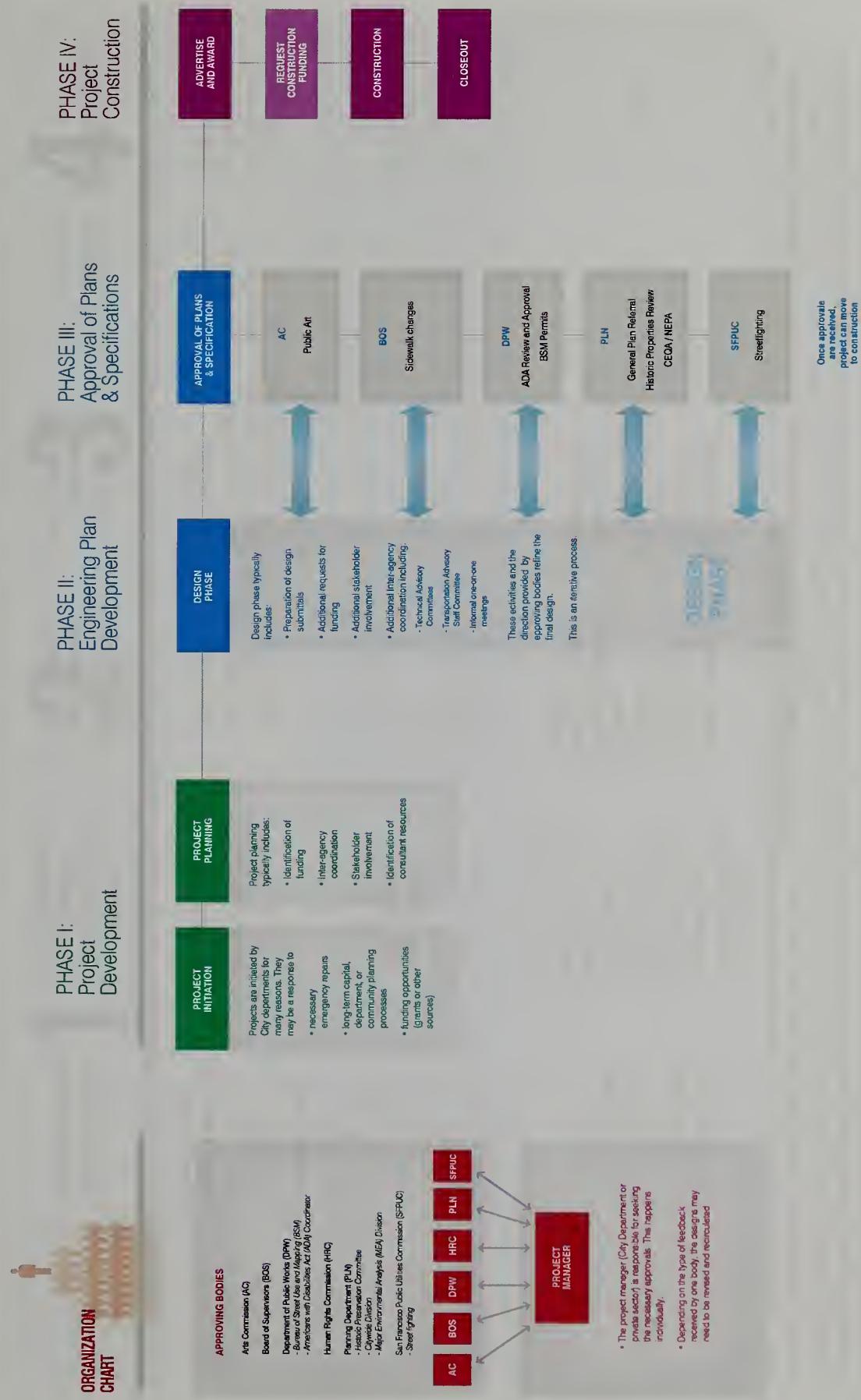
Information regarding project planning, requirements, approval processes, opportunities to appeal decisions and information about funding sources is spread among several City department websites, or staff members. The City of Seattle's Department of Planning and Development¹² offers a good example of consolidating the most relevant public information into a single site. Similarly, the City of Sacramento¹³ also provides a model of customer-focused information for private developers. As guidance is refined and updated and the City moves closer to a systematic process for plan design development and review, this information can be added.

¹² See the following link to the Seattle Department of Planning and Development:
<http://www.cityofseattle.net/dpd/>

¹³ See the following link to Sacramento's Community Development and Planning Department:
<http://www.cityofsacramento.org/dsd/planning/>

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APPENDIX A: City Street Design and Approval Process



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APPENDIX B: CCSF Roles and Responsibilities in Right-of-Way Management

Department	Department of Public Works	San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency	San Francisco Public Utilities Commission	San Francisco Planning Department	Mayor's Office on Disability	Arts Commission
Permits or Reviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sidewalks use • Private street tree removal or replacement • Any construction in the right of way 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special event parking • Residential parking • Temporary Street Closure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New water service and sewer service • Streetlights 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General plan conformance • CEQA compliance • Adherence of private projects to conditions of approval 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conformance of projects with ADA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select and maintain public art on the streets
Maintains	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City owned greenery • Retaining walls, bridges, stairs & other street structures • Streets, medians & sidewalks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parking Meters • Traffic signals • Overhead lines • Tracks • Rider Messages/Signs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water mains • City owned street lights • Sewers • Auxiliary Water Supply System 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain public street and monuments
Manages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement projects including the City's Roads • Right of way • Sewer main design and construction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master planning for traffic flow patterns, (including bike, pedestrian, auto & public transit) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedule & design of water main replacement projects • Water meter connection provision • Sewer inspection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Plan development • Historic & cultural resource surveys (Historic Preservation Commission) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A

Note: This list focuses on the CCSF implementing departments most directly involved in on-going planning, reviewing, permitting, constructing and maintaining the city's streetscapes. Many other departments and agencies are also involved in planning, funding, building and otherwise building the city's streetscapes including the San Francisco Fire Department, the General Services Agency's Capital Planning Program, the San Francisco County Transportation Authority, the San Francisco Police Department, the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency, and private utilities including PG&E, private groups and citizens. 10.21.09. Sources: Street Improvement Project Interviews, Better Streets Draft Plan, Department Websites, Planning Department Matrix Report

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APPENDIX C: Interdepartmental Groups, Authority, Focus & Participants

Group	Authority	Focus	Participating Departments	Participating Staff
Capital Planning Committee (CPC)	Review & Recommend	Formal body responsible for developing the City's 10-year capital plan and annual budget, review and recommend funding of capital projects prior to consideration by the BOS, (AC, 2005)	Air, BOS, CON, DPW, GSA, MOD, MYR, PLN, Port, SFPUC, SFMTA, Rec,	Department Heads, BOS Board President, Mayor's Office
Mayor's Director's Working Group (DWG)	Advisory	Major street and transportation projects at a policy level	DPW, GSA, MOD, PLN, SFPUC, SFMTA, Rec, SFCTA	Department Heads, staff as needed
Integrated Plan Implementation Committee (IPIC)	Working Group	Charged with developing, refining, implementing, and reporting on the community improvements, or public benefits programs, associated with adopted area plans (AC, 2006)	PLN, DPW, GSA, Rec SFMTA, SFCTA	Staff level personnel
Transportation Advisory Staff Committee (TASC)	Advisory	Final design of proposed improvements to ensure no interference with other current and projected transportation uses, especially the delivery of essential services (e.g. Fire, Muni, Police etc.)	DPW, Fire, Health MTA, PLN, Port, Police, REC	Mixed, Senior management, senior planners, senior analysts
Street Utilities Coordinating Committee (SUCC)	Advisory	Formulates policy as it affects the use of public streets by public and private utilities (AC, 1974,99)	CAC, DPW, PLN, DT, Police, PUC, Fire, Utilities	Senior management
Committee for Utility and Liaison on Construction and Other Projects (CULCOP)	Working Group	Coordinates scheduling of DPW utility work and to plan the utilities undergrounding construction program (AC, 1974,99)	DPW, DT, Fire, MTA, PUC, Police, RA, Utilities	Staff level personnel
Committee for Planning Utility Construction Program (CPUCP)	Working Group	Detailed planning of a 12 month construction program of all street utilities, exclusive of DPW projects, financed wholly or in part by gas tax or ad valorem funds and utilities undergrounding program (AC, 1974,99)	DPW, DT, Police, Utilities	Staff level personnel
Technical Advisory Committees (TACs)	Advisory	Advisory to City Project Managers for Major Projects	Typically DPW, MOD, PLN, PUC, MTA, SFCTA	Typically staff level personnel

Note: Air: San Francisco International Airport, BOS: Board of Supervisors, CAC: Community Advisory Committee, DPW: Department of Public Works, DT: Department of Technology, Health: Department of Public Health, Fire: San Francisco Fire Department, GSA: General Services Agency, MOD: Mayor's Office on Disability, MTA: San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency, MYR: Mayor's Office, PLN: Planning Department, PUC: Public Utilities Commission, Rec: Recreation and Park Department, SFCTA: San Francisco County Transportation Authority, Police: San Francisco Police Department, Port: San Francisco Port, RA: San Francisco Redevelopment Agency, Utilities include Hetch Hetchy Water and Power System, PG&E. Source: Street Improvement Project Interviews, Better Streets Draft Plan, City Municipal Code

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APPENDIX D: Summary of Peer Approaches to Planning and Design

The Controller's Office conducted a review of approaches used by other jurisdictions recognized for delivering development or streetscape improvement projects with greater efficiency and strategy. The information below was gathered from contacts in these jurisdictions. Information is presented on the following agencies:

- City of Seattle Department of Planning and Development (Seattle, Washington)
- City of Portland Bureau of Environmental Services (Portland, Oregon)
- City of Sacramento Development Services (Sacramento, California)
- District of Columbia Office of Planning (Washington, D.C.)
- City of Charlotte Department of Transportation (Charlotte, North Carolina)
- New York City Department of Transportation (New York, New York)
- City of Boulder Public Works Department, Transportation Division (Boulder, Colorado)

City of Seattle Department of Planning and Development (Seattle, Washington)

The mission of the City of Seattle Department of Planning and Development¹⁴ (DPD) is to manage growth and development within Seattle in a way that enhances quality of life. The DPD develops, administers, and enforces standards for land use, design, construction, and housing within the city limits. DPD is also responsible for long-range planning in Seattle. The mission of the DPD includes an explicit promotion of a "safe and sustainable environment through comprehensive planning, good design, and compliance with development regulations and community standards." In scope of responsibilities, this agency is comparable to the San Francisco Planning Department.

The Design Review Program was created by the Seattle City Council in 1994 to encourage better design and site planning by providing a forum for improved communication and participation among developers, neighbors, and the City early in the design and siting of new development. The focus of the program included flexibility in the application of development standards, and greater sensitivity towards neighborhoods slated for new development. Seattle City Planning (within the DPD) staffs the program, leads developers and architects and their development projects through the design review process, and explains the land use code and design guidelines. The program provides a forum for identifying the highest priority design guidelines for each project, any site-specific design-related issues that have the most impact on the project, and early design guidance. City Planning also publishes the

¹⁴ See <http://www.seattle.gov/dpd>

Community Guide to Design Review and maintains a toolkit¹⁵ for private project managers, designers and developers who go through Seattle's design review process. All on-going DPD projects are listed on City Planning website, including a brief overview, documentation of project development and review, project contact information, and opportunities for input.

Lessons Learned from Seattle's Design Review Program

- Demystify the process by clearly identifying who does what in carrying out the important function of project design review.
- Provide a "one stop" information system including website, telephone number for information and tools to enable greater communication and participation.
- Support initiatives by dedicating staff time with team members possessing the necessary skills, knowledge and abilities to accomplish the objectives.
- Reduce potential information or process gaps by clearly assigning roles and responsibilities to staff.
- Enable timely decision-making through periodic face-to-face communication and presentations between city and potential partners (such as private developers).
- Depending on the type of public involvement sought, provide a number of different public engagement opportunities.
- Customized approaches to local needs and situations may be more desirable than a universal standardized approach throughout the city.

City of Portland Bureau of Environmental Services (Portland, Oregon)

The City of Portland Bureau of Environmental Services provides Portland residents with water quality protection, watershed planning, wastewater collection and treatment, sewer installation and stormwater management. In scope of responsibilities, this agency is comparable to the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission. The Bureau has emerged as a leader in implementing sustainable stormwater management techniques, due in large part to the need to manage Portland's average annual rainfall (37 inches) in an ecological manner that protects public and watershed health. One of the key tools in the Bureau's "sustainable stormwater toolbox" is the Green Street, which was first applied as a single-purpose stormwater facility in the public right of way. This Green Street concept has evolved into an integrated, application that provides multiple benefits, such as green space and habitat connectivity, enhancement of the bicycle and pedestrian environment, and neighborhood livability. With each new green streets facility that is constructed, new compelling environmental and community benefits become apparent.

In the fall of 2005, City Commissioner Sam Adams charged all City bureaus with implementing green

¹⁵ See http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/Planning/Design_Review_Program/Applicant_s_Toolbox/default.asp

street elements as a component of street projects wherever feasible, and to increase feasibility by identifying solutions to planning and implementation challenges. multi-bureau team work allowed the City of Portland to implement green streets elements into existing plans, conduct demonstration projects and to analyze existing funding proposals for green streets projects. The team drafted citywide policy establishing overarching goals for departments and used existing systems planning and capital planning processes to identify opportunities for implementation of green street features. Finally, they created a “Green Street Profile Notebook” to catalogue the ever evolving designs and costs of street treatments.

Lessons Learned from Portland’s Green Streets Cross-Bureau Team Work

- Ensure success by first defining the need, then the responsibilities necessary to meet these needs, and *then* identifying which agencies and organizations are best suited to take on these responsibilities.
- Support initiatives by dedicating staff time with team members possessing the necessary skills, knowledge and abilities to accomplish the projects’ specific objectives.
- Build momentum towards longer-term goals by developing reasonable immediate actions and short-term goals and projects for implementation which can provide near-term successes and early benefits.
- Conduct demonstration projects to showcase coordination efforts and refine approach.
- Begin with the preferred outcome in mind and then “peel back” elements as constraints (physical or funding generated) exist.

City of Sacramento Community Development Department (Sacramento, California)

The City of Sacramento Community Development Department (CDD)¹⁶ is responsible for managing growth and development within Sacramento. Comparable to the San Francisco Planning Department and the Department of Building Inspection, the CDD conducts long-range planning, develops, administers, and enforces land use, design, construction, and housing standards within the city limits. CDD has developed three distinct programs to increase the efficiency of development services including the Matrix Program, a Facility Permit Program, and Community Brown Bag Education. The Matrix Program merges the CDD Staff and all City Departments related to the development review process into specialized teams organized around development types, (e.g. High Rise, Commercial, Tenant Improvement, etc.) in an effort to eliminate the traditional function based silos created by department divisions. The Facility Permit Program facilitates a rapid approval process for tenant alterations and improvements of commercial and industrial facilities. Finally, the Community Brown Bag Education sessions are provided by the CDD as an educational tool for applicants, designers, contractors, and other interested parties to learn about development related topics as they apply in the

¹⁶ See <http://www.cityofsacramento.org/dsd/>

City of Sacramento.

The Matrix Program was developed initially as a pilot in 2005 to achieve three goals. The first was to redesign the architectural design and plan review processes with more time at the beginning of the project to resolve any code-related deficiencies without impacting the start date for the project. The second was to implement a "front loaded" review process, one that was more suited to the special needs of large projects, including early technical involvement by the City at the design phase, use of City reviewers as code consultants to the design team, and the implementation of a system of rolling review and approval. The third was to "get the customer to success" in a timely, seamless, and predictable development review process. The city of Sacramento's Matrix Program was nominated as a recipient for the 2009 Visionary Icons in Building Excellence. This award recognizes a person, project, event or initiative that supports the Partnership's goals of making downtown Sacramento more vibrant.

Lessons Learned from Sacramento's Matrix & Community Brown Bag Programs

- Measure the overall predictability, timeliness, and clarity of a process by surveying customers or by holding focus groups.
- Develop a continuum of services to address the needs of certain groups, including web-based resources, hotlines, an ombudsman, and community brown bags.
- Identify opportunities to educate and involve potential participants in coordination who may not be interested initially.
- Support new coordination activities by pooling the knowledge and leadership of the most experienced individuals.
- Address technical and organizational issues – including potential jurisdictional, financial conflicts between members in coordination efforts.
- Increase staff accountability by creating a single point of contact for a project.

District of Columbia Office of Planning (Washington, D.C.)

The Office of Planning (OP) guides development of the District of Columbia, including planning for historic preservation, public facilities, parks and open spaces, and individual sites, and review for urban design, land use, and historic preservation. OP also conducts historic resources research and community visioning, and manages, analyzes, maps, and disseminates spatial and US Census data.

In 2008, OP commissioned a review and analysis of the District's planning and development processes, including the option of establishing a planning commission.¹⁷ The review and analysis recommended

¹⁷ See: <http://www.planning.dc.gov/planning/cwp/view,a,3,q,643226,planningNav,%7C34260%7C.asp>

several opportunities to reduce review times and increase efficiency in processing by creating consent agendas, increasing interagency coordination, and creating new tools for reviewing applications. Since the analysis, OP created a Capital Planning Unit to link comprehensive planning, capital budgeting and investment and facilities planning. A pilot group of agencies for this coordinated capital planning were identified.

Additionally, OP has developed a series of tools to assist agencies in project management and to serve as a reporting tool. The first is DCPropertyQuest¹⁸, a free, web-based interactive mapping tool to consolidate property-related information in the Washington DC area. The tool accesses a wide range of property-related information from various DC government agencies in one easy-to-use place. Additionally, each fiscal year, OP and other District agencies, develop a performance plan, which describes new initiatives that improve the quality of services and highlights metrics that meaningfully gauge progress against goals.¹⁹

Lessons Learned from Washington D.C.'s OP

- Ground planning efforts in a fiscal reality by involving funding agencies in collaborative teamwork.
- Build momentum towards longer-term goals by developing reasonable immediate actions and short-term goals and projects for implementation which can provide near-term successes and early benefits.
- Implement a performance measurement system to monitor progress, continuously improve plans, and refine targets.
- Implement recommendations on a pilot basis (in one particular area or with a few departments) to “get it right” before heavily investing in a new approach, technology or process.

City of Charlotte Department of Transportation (Charlotte, North Carolina)

The Charlotte Department of Transportation (CDOT) is the fourth largest department within the City of Charlotte. CDOT has more than 400 employees working in six divisions including Street Maintenance, Engineering & Operations, Development Services, Planning & Design, Public Service & Communications, and Departmental Services. CDOT provides a variety of services directly to the community, such as maintaining streets, installation, maintenance and monitoring of traffic signals and traffic calming devices. The department also provides overall transportation planning in order to improve the condition and safety of roads and streets.

¹⁸ See: <http://propertyquest.dc.gov/>

¹⁹ See:

http://www.planning.dc.gov/planning/cwp/view,a,3,q,568900,planningNav_GID,1603,planningNav,%7C32384%7C,.asp

In 2007, the Charlotte City Council adopted the Urban Street Design Guidelines (USDG) as an implementation tool for planning "complete" streets, or streets that provide capacity and mobility for motorists while remaining safe for pedestrians, cyclists, and neighborhood residents. The USDG include information about why this new approach to planning and designing streets is necessary, how the guidelines should be applied, and how specific design features should be used for different types of streets. The city adopted both a policy and a process for defining text amendments to zoning and subdivision ordinances based on the USDG.

Lessons Learned from Charlotte's Implementation of Urban Street Design Guidelines

- Provide adequate staff and technology, and require process documentation to ensure timely communication and decision making.
- Successful policy implementation requires a step-by-step approach to their application; tailor guidance for those needed to implement the policy, including planners, engineers and the public.
- Develop comprehensive street design guidelines to be applied to all new and modified streets.
- Confront the tradeoffs in street design by developing a framework for making design-related decisions.

New York City Department of Transportation (New York, New York)

The New York City Department of Transportation (NYCDOT) oversees one of the most complex urban transportation networks in the world. A staff of over 4,000 manages streets, sidewalks, highways, bridge structures and tunnels and associated street signs, traffic signals, streetlights, traffic markings, and parking meters. NYCDOT also designs bicycle facilities, bus lanes, and public plazas. The agency's work is guided by Sustainable Streets, the Strategic Plan for the New York City Department of Transportation 2008 and Beyond.²⁰

The New York City Street Design Manual was developed to provide policies and design guidelines to city agencies, design professionals, private developers and community groups for the improvement of streets and sidewalks throughout the five boroughs. It is intended to serve as a comprehensive resource for promoting higher quality street designs and more efficient project implementation. This document established a clear direction regarding NYCDOT's transportation policy. Additionally, NYCDOT developed targeted outreach programs including a refashioned and more substantive website and through directed outreach programs such as DOT Academy.²¹

Lessons Learned from New York City's Sustainable Streets

- Define the usage and applicability of policy documents (in this case the Manual) and their

²⁰ See: <http://www.nyc.gov/html/dot/html/about/stratplan.shtml>

²¹ See <http://www.nyc.gov/html/dot/html/about/dotacademy.shtml>

relationship to the design process.

- Develop standardized tools and checklists to increase consistency of projects and to enable review of projects for consistency with the Manual.
- Reach out and meet potential partners face-to-face, get to know each other, communicate often and develop messages that are responsive to their needs.
- Establish channels for regular feedback from potential partners including online customer comment forms, etc.
- Realize the "work in progress" nature of developing policy documents and guidance in this area. Information and guidance must be refined based on evolving best practices and real-world experience with its usage.

City of Boulder Public Works Department, Transportation Division (Boulder, Colorado)

The City of Boulder Public Works Department oversees Transportation, Utilities, Facilities and Asset Management, and Fleet Services, and jointly oversees Planning & Development Services workgroups. The Transportation Division provides for the mobility of persons and goods through the development and maintenance of a safe, efficient, environmentally sound and balanced transportation system with emphasis on transit, pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular transportation; and street maintenance and bikeway maintenance. This division is responsible for the planning and maintenance of the city's infrastructure including paving, sewer and construction projects.

The Transportation Master Plan (TMP) is a document that provides the policy basis for how transportation funding is spent, and what projects or programs the city focuses on to provide transportation services for its citizens through the year 2035. The TMP sets these projects and programs within the context of the broader community goals to protect the natural environment and enhance Boulder's quality of life. While the city tries to update its master plans about every five years, the TMP and the division website are treated as a "living" plan and updated on an as needed basis, to increase the accessibility to and transparency regarding the city's transportation direction. The site offers extensive background material and context for each update.

To implement the TMP, several strategic investment programs have been including a fiscally constrained investment program, (resulting from current funding sources), and a "complete streets" investment program representing a strategy connecting the community to regional transit improvements. The latter requires a modest increase in funding. This approach allows for strategic investments to be made if additional funds become available. Additionally, four policy focus areas endorsed by the City Council were selected to help prioritize projects. These include Multimodal Corridors, Regional Connections, Transportation Demand Management (TDM), and Funding.

Office of the Controller, City Services Auditor
Recommendations for Improved Streetscape Project Planning, Design, Review and Approval

In 2004, Boulder received a "Best Practice Award" from the Transportation Planning Council and the "Denver Regional Council of Governments Metro Vision Award" for the City of Boulder's 2003 Transportation Master Plan.

Lessons Learned from Boulder Transportation Master Plan Implementation

- Develop consensus for improvements to regional corridors including, but not limited to, automobile, rail, bus, bicycle, and pedestrian access.
- Develop priority criteria to rank projects in accordance with selected citywide goals.
- Commit increasingly limited revenues to improvements consistent with the selected priorities.
- Build the fiscal literacy of stakeholders; prepare a fully funded plan which describes how funds are currently spent and what that buys.
- Form broad coalitions to support a package of improvements.
- Continually develop and improve guidance and tools by establishing channels for regular feedback from users.

APPENDIX E: Team A: Advanced Planning for Streetscape Capital Objectives, Tasks, Roles and Responsibilities

APPENDIX E: Advanced Planning for Streetscape Capital Objectives,

Objectives: 1. Collaboratively plan streetscape projects of mutual benefit to City departments using available data, plans and priorities as a foundation.

2. Ensure that streetscape projects are planned, designed, constructed, and maintained consistent with an appropriate funding program.

3. Provide inter-departmental information on available funding programs addressing multiple streetscape needs (e.g. capital, maintenance, pedestrian, transit).

Tasks:

1. Identity overlap in department priorities
2. Coordinate advance planning using priority criteria
3. Identify sources of project funding, including new sources, repurposed sources
4. Incorporate cost analysis into overall plan
5. Factor projects into CIP

Structure:

One manager from each department who is charged with the authority to participate in collaborative project prioritization and selection process

Format:

Series of working sessions to identify a specific # of projects the City will collaboratively plan, design and fund

Reports to: Director's Working Group

Department	Staff	Role	Responsibilities	Should Bring to the Table
DPW	To be determined	Supplier of DPW capital planning, priorities and funding opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in collaborative project prioritization and selection Participate in street improvement projects Share significant DPW activities Ensure clear communication paths between team and DPW Collects necessary information from the appropriate staff within the department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge of department capital plan and priorities Experience in street improvement projects Experience in inter-departmental coordination Experience and knowledge of department budgeting process Ability to run issues "up their department flag pole" and return to the team with a resolution Knowledge of funding sources
SEMTA	To be determined	Supplier of SEMTA capital planning, priorities and funding opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in collaborative project prioritization and selection Share significant SEMTA activities, including short and long term capital projects and plans Ensure clear communication paths between team and SEMTA Collects necessary information from the appropriate staff within the department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge of department capital plan and priorities Experience in street improvement projects Experience in inter-departmental coordination Experience and knowledge of department budgeting process Ability to run issues "up their department flag pole" and return to the team with a resolution Knowledge of funding sources
SFPUC	To be determined	Supplier of SFPUC capital planning, priorities and funding opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in collaborative project prioritization and selection Share significant SFPUC activities Ensure clear communication paths between team and SFPUC Collects necessary information from the appropriate staff within the department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge of department capital plan and priorities Experience in street improvement projects Experience in inter-departmental coordination Experience and knowledge of department budgeting process Ability to run issues "up their department flag pole" and return to the team with a resolution
Planning	To be determined	Supplier of Planning capital planning, priorities and funding opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in collaborative project prioritization and selection Share a significant Planning activities, including long-range and community plans Ensure clear communication paths between team and Planning Collects necessary information from the appropriate staff within the department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge of department capital plan and priorities Experience in street improvement projects Experience in inter-departmental coordination Experience and knowledge of department budgeting process Ability to run issues "up their department flag pole" and return to the team with a resolution
Capital Planning	To be determined	Supplier of Citywide planning, priorities and funding opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in collaborative project prioritization and selection Share significant Citywide plans and activities Ensure clear communication paths between team and agency Collects necessary information from the appropriate staff within the department Can feed this information into the 10-year capital plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge of department capital plan and priorities Experience in street improvement projects Experience in inter-departmental coordination Experience and knowledge of department budgeting process Ability to run issues "up their department flag pole" and return to the team with a resolution
SECTA	To be determined	Supplier of SECTA planning, priorities and funding opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in collaborative project prioritization and selection Share significant SECTA plans and activities, Prop K. Ensure clear communication paths between team and agency Collects necessary information from the appropriate staff within the department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge of department capital plan and priorities Experience in street improvement projects Experience in inter-departmental coordination Experience and knowledge of department budgeting process Ability to run issues "up their department flag pole" and return to the team with a resolution
Capital Planning	To be determined	Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manage collaborative project prioritization and selection Facilitate and document process & decisions Collect data regarding timeline & progress Follow up with internal and external stakeholders Report to governing body 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prior coordinator experience Ability to maintain cooperative and motivated team Ability to manage collective work Ability to manage issues and escalate when necessary Ability to monitor group progress and performance Ability to serve as centralized point of information for internal and external stakeholders

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APPENDIX F: Team B: Streetscape Design Review Team Objectives, Tasks, Roles and Responsibilities

APPENDIX F: Team B: Streetscape Design Review Team Objectives, Tasks, Roles and Responsibilities

Objectives:

1. Provide one source of consistent guidance (per applicable guidelines) throughout the project development
2. Ensure designs will meet the requirements established by applicable guidelines

Tasks:

1. Review major streetscape projects at concept, 30% and 60% of design detail
2. Provide early design review guidance to project managers at each phase of the project
3. Confront and resolve design tradeoffs
4. Develop the body of knowledge including department manuals, standards, and procedures to increase the clarity of what is allowable
5. Resolve discrepancies & document policy changes to address those discrepancies
6. Provide preliminary design approval for documents

Structure: One manager from each department who is charged with the authority to review and permit activities within the public right-of-way

Format: Regular facilitated meetings to review projects on an on-going basis from concept to near final design

Reports to: Director's Working Group

Department	Staff	Functional Role	Responsibilities	Brings to Table
DPW	To be determined	DPW Streetscape Design Reviewer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review design at three separate phases of project design Provide guidance on design for compliance with standards, rules and policies under their jurisdiction Promote and incorporate on an on going basis guidance, procedures, and reviews that maximize efficient coordination and available funding programs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experience with BSM permitting and ADA compliance Authority to permit activities in the right-of-way Access to internal stakeholders
SFMTA	To be determined	SFMTA Streetscape Design Reviewer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review design at three separate phases of project design Provide guidance on design for compliance with standards, rules and policies under their jurisdiction Promote and incorporate on an on going basis guidance, procedures, and reviews that maximize efficient coordination and available funding programs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experience with SFMTA approval process Authority to permit activities in the right-of-way Access to internal stakeholders
SFPUC	To be determined	SFPUC Streetscape Design Reviewer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review design at three separate phases of project design Provide guidance on design for compliance with standards, rules and policies under their jurisdiction Promote and incorporate on an on going basis guidance, procedures, and reviews that maximize efficient coordination and available funding programs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experience and Familiarity with SFPUC approval process Authority to permit activities in the right-of-way Access to internal stakeholders
PLN	To be determined	Planning Streetscape Design Reviewer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review design at three separate phases of project design Provide guidance on design for compliance with standards, rules and policies under their jurisdiction Promote and incorporate on an on going basis guidance, procedures, and reviews that maximize efficient coordination and available funding programs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experience and Familiarity with Planning approval process (i.e. General Plan, CEQA compliance, and Historical Preservation) Authority to permit activities in the right-of-way Access to internal stakeholders
MOD	To be determined	Mayor's Office on Disability Streetscape Design Reviewer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review design at three separate phases of project design Provide guidance on design for compliance with standards, rules and policies under their jurisdiction Promote and incorporate on an on going basis guidance, procedures, and reviews that maximize efficient coordination and available funding programs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experience with ADA compliance Access to internal stakeholders
TBD	To be determined	Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manage groups in collaborative project development Facilitate and document process & decisions Collect data regarding timeline & progress Assist with public information sharing and & stakeholder involvement Report to governing body 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prior coordinator experience Ability to maintain cooperative and motivated team Ability to manage collective work Ability to manage issues and escalate when necessary Ability to monitor group progress and performance Ability to serve as centralized point of information for

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APPENDIX G: Recommended City Street Design and Approval Process

